

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 2-54 are pending in the application, with claims 2, 10, 17, 23, 26, 27, 30, 34, 35, 48, and 50 being the independent claims. Claim 1 is sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. New claims 2-54 are sought to be added. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Priority

Applicants request the entry of the above amendments to the specification to correctly recite priority. Applicants note that this priority information was included in the Application Data Sheet (37 CFR 1.76) submitted with this application on August 22, 2003, in accordance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.78(2). Furthermore, the United States Patent and Trademark Office Filing Receipt dated November 24, 2003 (Confirmation No. 8523) acknowledges that this application was submitted as a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/528,582, filed March 20, 2000, which claims the benefit of a U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/188,155 filed on March 9, 2000. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that this application enjoys the benefits of priority of the above mentioned prior applications.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because "copy marks exists through the drawings and lines, numbers and letters are not uniformly thick and well defined." (See Office Action, page 3). Applicants have amended the drawings accordingly and have provided amended replacement sheets. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the drawings be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,581,768 to Garney *et al.* (See Office Action, page 4). Claim 1 is sought to be cancelled and therefore, the Applicants believe that this rejection has been rendered moot.

New claims 2-54

Applicants seek to add new claims 2-54. These new claims are fully supported by the specification and introduce no new matter. Applicants respectfully submit that these new claims are patentable over the art of record.

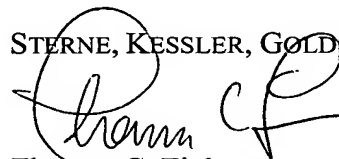
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas C. Fiala', is written over the printed name.

Thomas C. Fiala
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 43,610

Date: February 16, 2005

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600